

V. REMARKS

The Office Action objects to claims 1 and 6-8. Also, the Office Action objects to the term "like". Further, the Office Action objects to claim 1 because the phrase "such as" renders the claim indefinite. The claims are amended to obviate the objections. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by Sakata (U.S. Patent No. 6,631,928). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Sakata teaches an expansion joint device that includes a pair of connecting passage end regions, an expansion outer cylinder and a cylindrical resin film. The pair of connecting passage end regions are equipped to both axial ends thereof. The expansion outer cylinder is capable of expanding and contracting in the axial direction with one axial end region thereof substantially connected in a leakproof manner to one of the connecting passage end regions and the other axial end region thereof substantially connected in a leakproof manner to the other of the connecting passage end regions. The cylindrical resin film has no permeability to fluid flowing therethrough and has flexibility in the axial direction, which is substantially concentrically arranged within the interior of the expansion outer cylinder with one axial end thereof substantially connected in a leakproof manner to one of the connecting passage end regions and the other axial end thereof substantially connected in a leakproof manner to the other of the connecting passage end regions. The cylindrical intermediate region of the cylindrical resin film is arranged to cover the inner surface of the expansion outer cylinder in a leakproof manner. Each of the connecting passage end regions is connected with a connecting body of another passage adjacent thereto in condition that axial pretension is provided to the cylindrical resin film.

Claim 1, as amended, is directed to a pipe joint that includes a hollow cylindrical joint body made of elastic material with a prescribed length and a circular flange for connecting piping attached to the both ends of the joint body. Claim 1 recites that, on a side of an inner circumference of the joint body, is a bellows metal pipe closely contacted with the joint body on the side of the inner circumference of the joint body and a circular attachment seat with its section being L-shaped provided at each of both ends of the metal pipe. Claim 1 recites that the thickness of

III. AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

A formal corrected replacement sheet of drawing Figure 7 that illustrates the legend "Prior Art" is filed herewith.

the joint body is at least larger than the size of a summit or a trough of the bellows of the metal pipe, the attachment seat comprises a small cylindrical pipe and a circular plate fixed by welding to a tip of an open side of the small cylinder pipe. Claim 1 recites that the circular plate is contacted with the surface of the outer side of the flange and the small cylindrical pipe is fixed and attached to an inner circumferential surface of the flange.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each element of claim 1 as amended. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

Claims 2, 9 and 10 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reason claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by Takaara (U.S. Patent No. 6,681,808). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Takaara discloses a flexible tube for a vacuum system that includes a tube body and a cover. The tube body is made of hard material and has projected parts and depressed parts. The cover is provided over an outer surface of the tube body. The cover is made of elastic material. Also, the cover is in contact with and around the projected parts of the tube body and is formed over the depressed parts of the tube body so that a vacant space is formed between the tube body and the cover. The cover is made of a material selected from a group consisting of heat shrinkable silicone rubber and a polyolefin resin.

As discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each element of claim 1 as amended. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

Claims 2 and 6-8 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reason claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Claims 3-5 are canceled and therefore the rejection as applied thereto is now moot.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Furthermore, neither Sakata and Takaara mentions anything about the mode of attaching of a circular attachment seat which is an amended feature of the claimed invention. Regarding the circular attachment being provided, each of both ends of the metal pipe seat with its section being L-shaped, the Examiner states that the feature of the Claim 1 is disclosed in Takaara. However, the one disclosed by Takaara is only composed as that each of both ends of the metal pipe is formed integrally and widely open so as to be easily connected to a connect port, and it is not as the attachment seat of the present invention which is with a small cylindrical pipe and a circular plate formed L-shaped, nor as the one in which the circular plate is contacted with the outer surface of the flange and the small cylindrical pipe is fixed and attached to the inner circumferential surface of the flange. For this point, both inventions are different from each other in their configuration. Further, in the present invention, from the configuration pointed out above, the bellows metal pipe is easily attached to the flange, but such functional effect cannot be expected from the disclosure of Takaara. Therefore, there is no reason for denying inventive step of the present invention only for the reason that the invention by Takaara had been disclosed before the application date of the present invention.

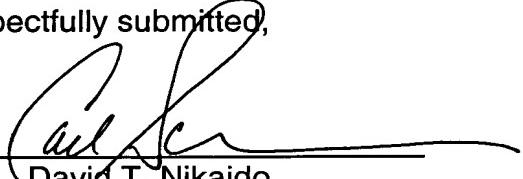
For this additional reason, it is respectfully submitted that the claims, as amended, are allowable over Sakata and Takaara.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure(s): One (1) sheet of Replacement Drawings (FIG. 7)
 One (1) sheet of Annotated Drawings showing changes (FIG. 7)

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FIG. 6

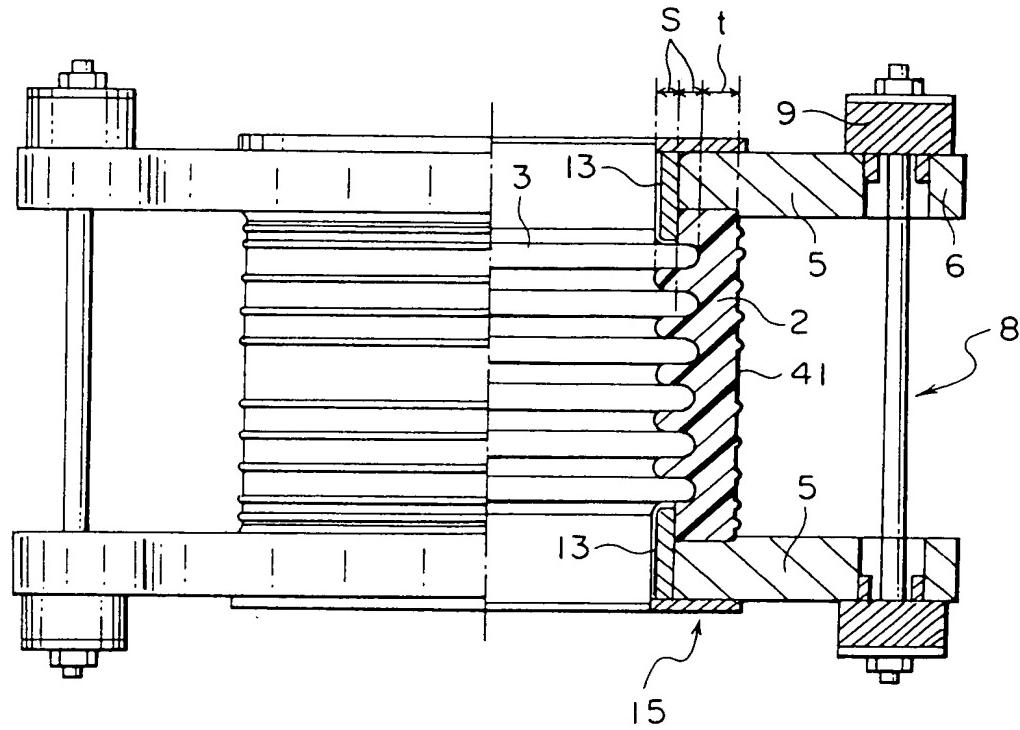


FIG. 7 PRIOR ART

